

#### RELATED TERMS

- Full-Scale Exercise
- Mass Casualty Incident
- Unified Command



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#### PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management
- Hazardous Materials

## LESSON LEARNED

### Incident Command: Limiting the Number of Personnel at Command Posts

#### SUMMARY

Incident commanders should consider limiting the number of personnel at command posts (CP) to mission-essential staff. This reduces the likelihood that commanders will be distracted from their core command responsibilities.

#### DESCRIPTION

On April 28, 2006, Volusia County, Florida, hosted a full-scale exercise (FSE) simulating simultaneous terrorist attacks on two cargo trains carrying hazardous materials (HazMat) through different parts of the county. The FSE was designed to improve cooperation among agencies likely to respond to a Volusia County terrorism rail incident. The FSE focused on HazMat response and the triage and treatment of victims at two railroad incident scenes. A Volusia County Sheriff's Office command vehicle served as the unified command post (UCP) during the FSE.

During the exercise, support staff stationed at the UCP distracted commanders from their core command responsibilities. These personnel engaged commanders in multiple discussions concerning operational and support activities. The repeated discussions overwhelmed commanders and prevented them from focusing on other issues related to the overall management of the incident. Following the FSE, Volusia County Emergency Management (VCEM) concluded that command staff and mission-essential personnel should be the only individuals stationed at CPs.

Incident commanders should consider limiting the number of personnel at CPs to mission-essential staff. This reduces the likelihood that commanders will be distracted from their core command responsibilities.

#### CITATION

Volusia County Emergency Management. *Volusia County Terrorism Rail Exercise: After Action Report*. 09 Aug 2006.

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